

Having done honour to Liverpool for the classic taste displayed in St. George's Hall, we turn with less satisfaction to the Sailors' Home,—a great four-turreted building in the Elizabethan Tudor style. A critic, in describing it, says it forms 'a beautiful contrast with the vastness and grandeur of the Custom House,' in conjunction with which it is seen. What does this mean? That there is merit in mere 'contrast?' or does it imply that there is 'beauty' in the juxtaposition of two buildings, the one 'vast and grand,' the other, by inference, neither the one nor the other, or vast without 'grandeur, or—what? 'Contrast' there is, indeed! Such contrast as would appear in the close neighbourhood of the Erechtheion of Athens and Hardwicke Hall; in Derbyshire; or between the fire-altar of the Greek vestal and an inverted English gridiron. Nothing can be more gratuitously violent and offensive to severe taste than the direct opposition between the simple grandeur of the Custom House, with its fine Ionic portico, and the great cube of the Sailors' Home, with its little antiquated gables, towers, vanes, and ogee-headed roofs, its multiplicity of mullioned windows, its *parvum in multo*. Of characteristic expression it has none. But, was there no allowed admission of certain forms and symbolic details which would have associated Jack's land-home with his sea calling? Was there nothing to be done with the stern and the prow of his loved ship?"

THE OPERATIVE MASONS' BENEFIT SOCIETY.

THE annual dinner of this old and useful society was held at Highbury-barn Tavern, on Monday last, Mr. Thomas Jackson in the chair. The society having been established in 1810, this was its forty-second anniversary. After partaking of a substantial dinner, the meeting, which consisted of nearly seventy persons, responded with hearty loyalty to the usual preliminary toasts, in course of which the chairman, in reference to his Royal Highness the Prince Consort, said he had reason to believe that the Prince contemplated the foundation of a great building and establishment, in which theory would be combined with practice, in the advancement of science and art, by a concentration of talent and skill.

On giving the toast of the evening, "Prosperity to the Operative Masons' Benefit Society," the chairman stated the objects of the society to be the raising and securing of a fund for the mutual relief of its members in sickness and superannuation, and for burial of members or their wives, in case of death. During illness a member receives 1*l.* a-week for eight months, 10*s.* a-week for eight months longer, and 5*s.* a-week for the remainder of his days, or so long as the society may be in existence short of that period, the superannuated member being exempt altogether from contribution. This society, said the chairman, in no way encourages disagreements between the employers and the employed. It leaves the men entirely to their own feelings and conscience: neither does it meddle with political questions: it is exclusively devoted to a prudent foresight and preparation for the evil day of sickness or of death. In these circumstances he felt it his duty to countenance and encourage this society; and he appealed to other practical men—to men, he meant, who, like himself, had been practical masons, as well as to those still struggling as such in the present day, to assist and to increase its funds and its ability to do good.

The Secretary being called on, read the usual report, which stated, amongst other details, that the funds of the society in stock at present amounted to 668*l.* 12*s.*; and had been gradually and steadily on the rise for years. In 1848 they amounted to 469*l.* odd; in 1850, to 476*l.*; in 1851 to 533*l.*; and in January 1852, to 609*l.* A sum of 29*l.* 11*s.* had been added by gentlemen present. In course of last year eighteen members, and since that time eight more, had been benefited by the institution. The income of the society from January last up to the present time was 87*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.*

Letters of apology and of good wishes from Messrs. Baker, Cubitt, Grissell, Piper, Todd, and others whose names we did not distinctly hear, were enumerated by the chairman, whose health was proposed by Mr. Kay, and warmly responded to; and shortly afterwards we left the meeting still enjoying themselves, without much speechifying, but with perfect good fellowship, interspersed with music, vocal and instrumental.

VENTILATION.

THE Sessions House of the Grey Friars Church has been ventilated by Mr. Watson, of Halifax. The principle employed is demonstrated by means of an oblong cylindrical glass vessel, 8 or 9 inches in diameter, open below, and having a globular top, from which rises a neck or funnel about 1½ inch diameter and 5 or 6 inches high.

When this apparatus is placed over a lighted candle, in a shallow vessel containing water, the oxygen contained in the cylinder, notwithstanding the proportionably large vent at the top, is speedily exhausted, and the candle "goes out." But if, before the extinction is fully accomplished, a thin plate be introduced into the funnel, forming a vertical diaphragm, by which it is divided into two equal tubes, a double current is immediately established—the vitiated air is withdrawn by the one tube, and a current of pure atmospheric air introduced by the other; the effect of which is shown by the revival and continued support of the flame of the candle previously on the eve of expiry.

The result at the Session House of Greyfriars Church is said to be successful; but the accounts that have reached us and those in the local papers are far from sufficient, of themselves, to establish for the arrangement any claim to particular attention.

We have before us some of the reports and papers connected with the recent inquiry into the mode of ventilation adopted at the new Houses of Parliament; but we are anxious to have the whole subject before us before we deal with a part of it.

It seems to us, as we have before said, that we are giving up simple and efficient means provided by nature, to adopt elaborate, costly, and inefficient complexities.

DISTRICT SURVEYOR'S FEES.

EDWARDS v. GOLDBY.

THIS was an action brought in the Shore-ditch County Court, before Mr. Serjt. Storks, to recover the sum of 4*l.* 4*s.* due to the plaintiff for fees as district surveyor of the parish of St. Mary, Islington. The defendant is a builder residing at Standgate Cottage, King Henry's Walk, Ball's Pond.

Mr. Wakeling, who appeared (on the 20th inst.) for the plaintiff, referred to the 13th section of the Metropolitan Buildings Act (7 & 8 Vict. c. 84), by which the builder is bound to give notice to the district surveyor before he commences any new building. The defendant gave the required notice on the 31st of January, 1851, and immediately commenced building two houses, but subsequently stopped; and in the month of May in the same year, gave another notice; and Mr. Edwards, through his assistant Mr. Frederick Edwards, supervised the building. The plaintiff, on the completion of the work, delivered his account, claiming his fees as specified in schedule L, viz. 2*l.* 2*s.* for each house, being fourth-rate (first class) buildings; and, agreeably to the directions of section 77, tendered a receipt signed with his Christian and surname. He (Mr. Wakeling) might add that the defendant had promised payment. It was impossible, therefore, to conceive what answer he could now have to the plaintiff's claim.

The defendant was of opinion that he was not liable, having since sold the houses.

Mr. Serjt. Storks.—But you are liable as the builder. The 77th clause, to which Mr. Wakeling has directed my attention, enacts that the surveyor is entitled to receive his fees from the builder, or from the owner, or from the occupier of the building. All, therefore,

that I have to decide is, whether the plaintiff has complied with the Act of Parliament.

Mr. Frederick Edwards was then called and proved the facts as stated by Mr. Wakeling. Whereupon

Judgment was given for the plaintiff, the debt and costs to be paid in a week.

ASSESSMENT OF EXETER HALL.

APPEAL.

LAST week a special session was held in the Vestry-hall of the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, to determine the rateable value of this property.

It appeared that the building was formerly assessed in the sum of 2,500*l.* which, upon appeal to quarter session about three years ago, was reduced to 2,000*l.* The appellants, in consequence of a reduction in their receipts, and from other causes, sought to be assessed at 1,200*l.* per annum.

Mr. Cantwell, surveyor, proved the assessment of the building, according to the receipts of the company, to be at the rateable value of 2,250*l.* after striking out certain items of deduction claimed by the proprietors, which, in his opinion, were not comprised in the strict meaning of "deductions," as allowed in the Parochial Assessment Act. He had surveyed the old Covent-garden theatre, also that portion of Drury-lane within St. Martin's parish. Exeter Hall associated more with theatrical property than with any other.

Mr. Paine, surveyor, corroborated Mr. Cantwell's calculations, but estimated the rateable value at 2,200*l.* He had surveyed the present Italian Opera, assessed at the rateable value of 3,000*l.* and also that portion of Drury-lane within Covent-garden parish, which, as an entirety, was assessed at 2,100*l.* He had also made the valuations of the Lyceum, Strand, Olympic, Victoria, and Astley's theatres. In his opinion theatrical property was far more precarious than Exeter Hall.

Messrs. Edmeston, Lockyer, and Ainger, surveyors, supported the assessment at 1,200*l.* claiming the deductions before alluded to.

The chairman (Mr. C. T. Antrobus), after the hearing of the appeal, directed the room to be cleared, and on return the Bench confirmed the assessment of 2,000*l.*

Miscellaneous.

THE IRISH GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1853.

—On the 1st of May, 1853, will be seen in Dublin what Ireland can produce in the way of an industrial exhibition. The Royal Dublin Society then holds its triennial exhibition of manufactures, but this usual exhibition will be merged into, and no doubt quite eclipsed by, the exhibition designed for 1853. Mr. Dargan, the eminent Irish railway contractor, has accompanied his promise of 20,000*l.* with an intimation that, should that sum be insufficient to help the committee well through their great undertaking, he will add to it—double it, if necessary. Mr. C. P. Roney is the honorary secretary to the Exhibition committee. We understand he declined to take a salaried office lest it should involve a tie upon his time, or interfere with his present duties. The Exhibition will, however, be of material importance to the railway interests with which Mr. Roney is associated; and, therefore, his support of the Exhibition is quite consonant with the performance of his duties to the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company. Possessing as Mr. Roney does great influence in Ireland amongst the upper classes—acquired by family connections and associations with public movements—he is, no doubt, just the party to be of service to the Irish Great Exhibition. Mr. John Deane, who was honorary secretary to the Dublin branch of the Cork Exhibition, is the paid assistant secretary to the coming Exhibition. He is a gentleman of much energy.—*Herapath's Journal*.

"POST" RECEIVING BOXES.—The practice of erecting cast-iron posts or pillars in the streets, and forming letter-receiving boxes in them, as is the case in some parts on the Continent, is about to be introduced into Jersey as an experiment, previous, no doubt, to its introduction into England. The post-office authorities in St. Martin's-le-grand have ordered four cast-iron pillars, with letter-receiving places in them, to be erected in St. Helier's, Jersey.